

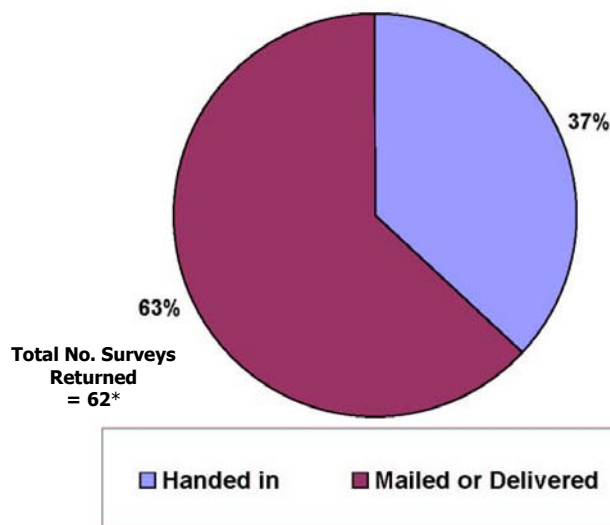
Summary of Responses from DLNR/DAR Public Survey on Bottomfish Restricted Fishing Areas (BRFA)

Background and General Summary

Surveys (Figure 1, at right) were handed out at public meetings held during January 2006. The surveys could also be downloaded from the DLNR/DAR website through February. Some people handed back written surveys at the January meetings, but more filled out their surveys at home and mailed them to DAR or delivered them later (Figure 2, below). The deadline for receiving surveys was February 17, 2006.

Figure 2: Response to Survey

Percentage of Surveys Handed in vs Mailed/Delivered Later



* Not including letters and maps, which were summarized, but could not be tallied.

Figure 1: Survey Format

The survey form is titled 'SURVEY State Recommendation Bottomfish Restricted Fishing Areas (BRFAs)'. It includes logos for the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR). The form asks respondents to provide their opinion on existing and recommended BRFAs. It includes two tables for rating BRFAs as 'Good', 'Bad', or 'Undecided', and a section for 'Additional comments'.

1. What do you think of the existing Bottomfish Restricted Fishing Areas (BRFAs)? Refer to map of Existing BRFAs.
Please check only ONE box.

BRFA	Good	Bad	Undecided	Why?
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

2. What do you think about the State's recommendations for new BRFAs? Refer to map of Recommended BRFAs.
Please check only ONE box.

BRFAs	Good	Bad	Undecided	Change(s)	How/Why?
A					
B					
C					
D					
E					
F					
G					
H					
J					
K					
L					
M					
N					
O					

Additional comments:

From polls taken over the whole series of bottomfish public meetings held in January (344 people in attendance throughout the islands), DAR found that most people (more than 72%) did not have access to or use the Internet (Figure 3, right). This is made DAR recognize we need to do more than post notices and updates on the Internet to keep people informed. For this reason, we are increasing efforts to share information via mail-outs, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc.

Figures 4-5 (next page) summarize the ratings (good or bad) given by survey respondents to existing versus recommended BRFAs. Survey respondents made in-depth comments about areas where they fish regularly. Most people did not have knowledge or interest in areas far from home. Please refer to the maps provided to relate the numbers (existing) and letters (recommended) to specific locations for BRFAs in each county. Detailed maps of the revised BRFAs are also provided and there is a table summarizing geographic boundaries and landmarks. This table shows the relationship between the letters given to the 14 areas recommended in January 2006, versus letters reassigned to the 12 areas set forth in the revised recommendation (July 2006).

Figure 3:

Proportion of Public Meeting Attendees Using the Internet

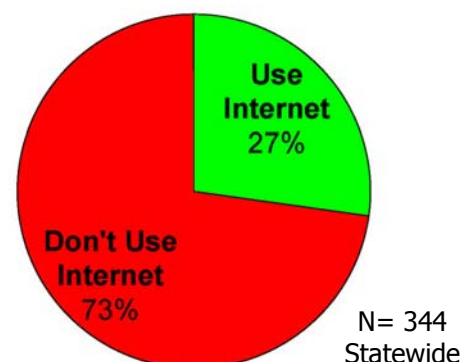


Figure 4:

Survey Comments: Existing BRFAs

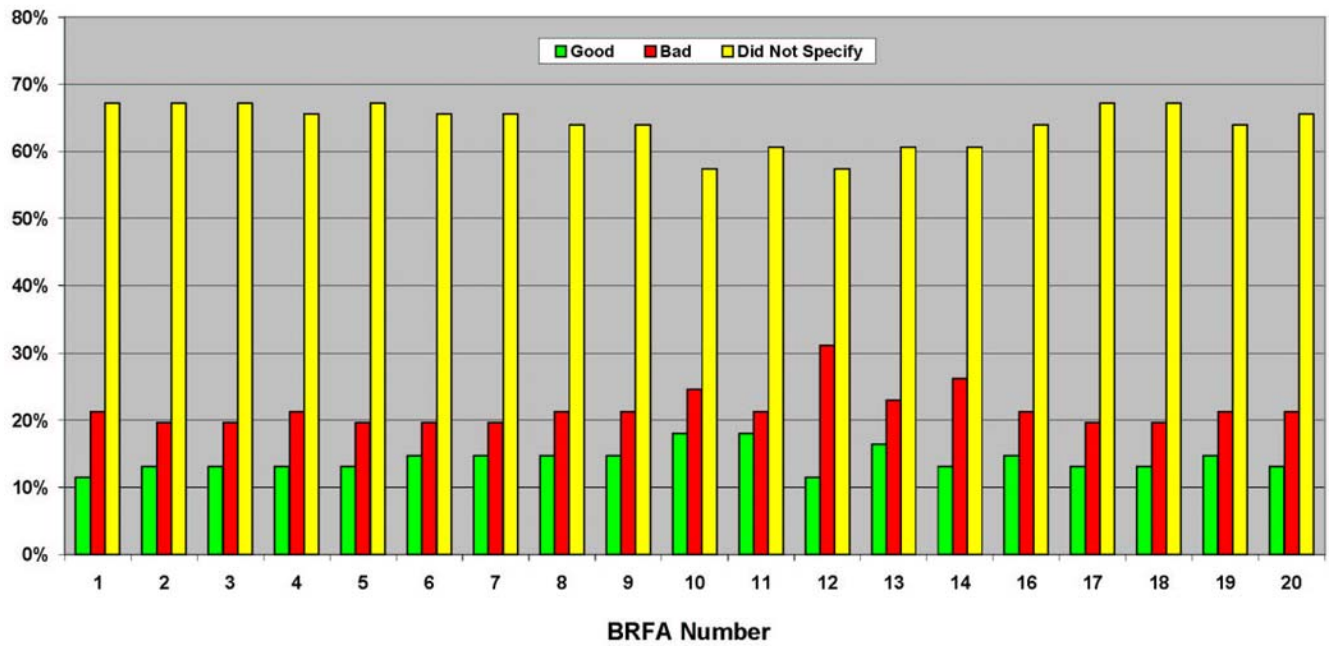
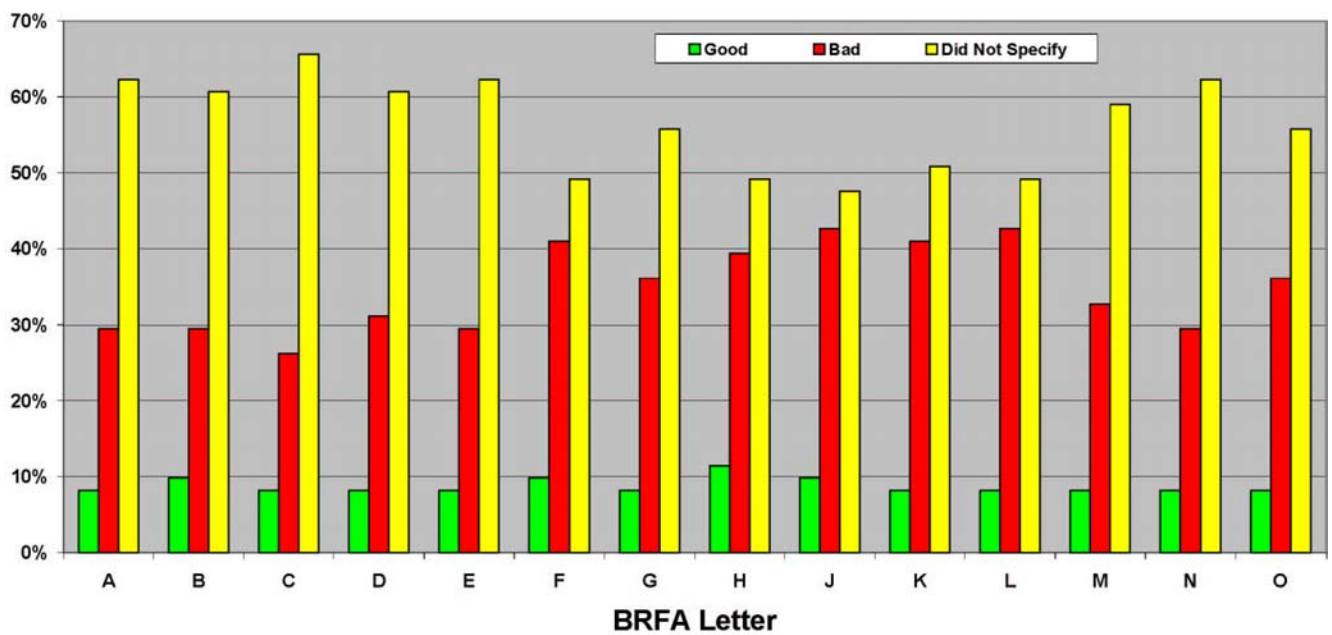


Figure 5:

Survey Comments: BRFAs as Recommended January 2006



Generally, the existing BRFA's had a slightly higher approval rating than proposed BRFA's. Table 1 shows the approval-rating breakdown between existing BRFA's and the ones recommended in January 2006. The new BRFA's were destined to be somewhat unpopular, because if implemented a large amount of important bottomfish habitat areas would be closed to fishing. DAR's challenge (and our balancing act) involves trying to reduce unnecessary impacts to fishers, yet still conserve bottomfish stocks by protecting their habitat. These stocks have been shown to be in need of a level of protection. Based on comments received via the survey and public meetings, DLNR/DAR has tried to create an appropriate balance that ensures bottomfish stocks in the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) will be fished at sustainable levels.

Table 1: Approval Rating for Existing vs Recommended BRFA's (January 2006)		
Rating	Existing	Proposed
Good	14%	9%
Bad	22%	35%
Did Not Specify	64%	56%

Survey respondents had a general dislike for closed areas period (Table 1), but some people had positive things to say about the BRFA's they knew well. Although some people felt bottomfish were somewhat protected by existing BRFA's, they complained about a lack of enforcement. People also complained about a lack of information regarding research taking place in the BRFA's and requested that more detailed reports and information be shared with the public. One of the most frequently made requests was for DAR to provide detailed information showing how we assessed whether or not existing BRFA's had been effective. A detailed report with this information is being prepared and will be made public.

Fishers did not support permanently closed areas. Some agree there may be a need to protect resources in certain regions (particularly Penguin Bank) for a period of time, but felt permanent closures put too much of a hardship on local fishing communities. This feeling prompted DAR to decide we should periodically review the BRFA system, with an eye to adjusting the areas as needed.

Some people felt areas selected for BRFA's near points and channels of islands should not have been included, because they are naturally protected by rough weather and hazardous conditions throughout most of the year. They suggested BRFA's should be put in heavily populated or highly accessible areas, particularly in leeward regions, where weather is generally less of an issue. In response to this and other considerations, particularly regarding safety issues, DAR has moved some areas away from the points. However, because placing BRFA's adjacent to areas with varying oceanographic conditions is actually part of the intended design for the new BRFA system, DLNR/DAR has retained a BRFA system that is connected with island currents and includes BRFA's in all counties.

People were alarmed by the maps they had seen at public meetings, because they made it look as if the BRFA's extended all the way to the shoreline (in some cases to land). This was never the intention. Large boxes were used to delineate potential BRFA zones, with the intent of showing parallels or meridians that could be useful to navigators. Within these boxes, the protected areas for bottomfish were to be between 50-200 fathoms (100-400 meters), which we refer to as the Bottomfish Habitat Depth Range (BHDR). The revised maps (attached and shown on the website) take care of this problem and include an appropriate offshore distance for each BRFA, based on the distance from shore at which the 50-fathom contour is found in each region.

A detailed account of public comments and DLNR/DAR responses has been summarized and is provided on DAR's website.